



Faculty of Tropical  
AgriSciences

# Tropical News

“Newsletter for  
FTA Friends”

## A Word from the Dean

*Dear Colleagues, Students and FTA Friends,*

*2020 has not turned out as expected due to the Covid-19 pandemic. We have taken the necessary measures and switched to online teaching to continue providing high quality lectures. In the meantime, the Faculty has moved to our new premises – the Pavilion of Tropical AgriSciences – providing top-notch laboratories for future research. This is a historic milestone for the faculty after over a half-century of existence to finally unite all the departments under one roof.*

*I believe that these new modern premises will take our scientific work to a whole new level and possibly attract more cooperation with similar institutions abroad, so that the FTA can become a new European centre for research in the field of Tropical AgriSciences.*

*Thank you all for working under such challenging circumstances and I look forward to meeting you all in 2021 in the new Pavilion.*

*I wish you a peaceful Christmas and all the best for the coming year!*

*Prof. Jan Banout*

## FTA new building

The Faculty of Tropical AgriSciences's (FTA) new „green pavilion“ provides modern spaces for those interested in studying tropical agriculture in developing countries, and also facilities for research in sustainable technologies, food security, renewable energy and agroforestry.

Additional centres and programmes include the Derby Antelope Rescue

Programme as well as the Center for Infectious Animal Diseases (CINeZ).

In addition to top-quality laboratories and a herbarium, the pavilion boasts a multicultural centre.

The facility offers top-notch technology and space for scientific research. Please find more information about the FTA on our [web page](#).

## DECEMBER 2020

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# Our Successes



## New Research Centre

Dr. Jiří Černý, a virologist at the FTA is one of the founding members of the **Centre for Infectious Animal Diseases (CINeZ)** at the Czech University of Life Sciences Prague. Aside from general research, it will provide services to breeders and do testing of their animals. The research should make new findings about the mechanisms of infectious diseases transmission not only from one species of animal to another or within different species, but also from animals to humans and vice versa.



## Mobile laboratories

Dr. Hynek Roubík and Dr. Jiří Černý at the FTA can pride themselves once again during the pandemic with a brand-new invention: the **CZU mobiLAB**. This concept of a mobile laboratory can provide rapid-response and swift deployment in **remote areas** where **testing for COVID-19** and other infectious diseases would otherwise be impossible. Supported by the Czech Development Agency - CzechAid, in cooperation with ADRA International, the **CZU mobiLAB** will first travel to [Ethiopia](#) and [Zambia](#).

## Biogas Research Team

The **Biogas Research Team (BRT)** led by [Dr. Hynek Roubík](#) aims to reveal the current state of, bottlenecks in and perspectives for biogas plants in both developing and developed countries.

Despite the current COVID-19 pandemic, the BRT continues its research activities throughout the world. Currently, we have projects (both development and research) in Ethiopia, Zambia, Moldova, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Vietnam, Indonesia and the Ukraine. Especially focusing on determining the real **impact of biogas technology** on the environment and on climate change. Furthermore, we aim to contribute crucially to the current global debate on biogas technology around the world.

## Support of Fair Trade

The FTA together with its **BeFair association (BeFair)** promote responsible and sustainable consumption and raise awareness of global social and environmental issues.



## Sustainable land management

The head of Department of Crop Sciences and Agroforestry, **Assoc. Prof. Bohdan Lojka** currently serves as **President of the Czech Association for Agroforestry (CSAL)**, national branch of European Agroforestry Federation (EURAF). The main objective of the organization is the promotion of agroforestry in the Czech Republic. Currently, it has 40 members including people from academic and research organisations (focusing on agriculture and rural development) as well as farmers. CSAL is very active at the international level and works actively on networking in Europe and the transfer of ideas into the Czech environment.

## We care about equality

The FTA staff have been trained during a 40-hour **"Non-discriminatory practices and approaches"** for academic and administrative staff" training which brought new insights and practical knowledge, including links to further study in a specialized [library](#) and contact with a [legal advice centre](#). This course ensures non-discrimination and **equal opportunity** at the FTA, regardless of gender, race, disability, culture, language, age and religion.

# International Cooperation



## Horizon 2020

A project within the H2020 programme entitled „**Long-term Europe-Africa Partnership for Food and Nutrition Security, and Sustainable Agriculture (LEAP4FNSSA)**” has been running at the FTA since November 2018. The Faculty of Tropical AgriSciences is one of 35 implementing institutions from the EU and AU. The objective of the project is to establish a Europe-Africa International Research Consortium that will provide a tool for all European and African institutions ready to engage in a sustainable partnership platform for research and innovation on food and nutrition security as well as functional and sustainable agriculture.



## New project in Ethiopia

As part of the project “**Arba Minch Fruit Value Chain**”, three FTA representatives (**Anna Maňourová, William Nkomoki and Jan Staš**) went to Ethiopia to **kick-off** a new four-year development project, financed by the Czech Development Agency. Its aim is to improve the knowledge and skills of local **farmers**, diversifying **local fruit** production, opening **new business** opportunities for farmers and, last but not least, the reduction of post-harvest losses.

During the first visit to Arba Minch, the FTA team focused on the analysis of local markets, initiated training in local cooperatives on fruit processing (namely mango and papaya), and documented the current status of and potential prospects for diversification of local fruit-based farming systems.

## Project Erasmus+ ESCAPAdE



To face challenges in **Plant science** related topics (climate, demography, new crop protection), the project Erasmus+ ESCAPAdE (Erasmus Curricula in Applied Plant Sciences), funded by the Erasmus+ programme of the European Union, aims to **facilitate student mobility** in Applied Plant Sciences and to improve interactions between present and future actors: students, professors, researchers and stakeholders.

## Student conference

The first virtual **Euroleague for Life Sciences (ELLS)** - Scientific Student Conference was organized by the University of Natural Resources and Life Sciences, Vienna, on November 2020. FTA students presented their work, broadening their knowledge and experience of scientific conferences and discussions.

## Tropentag conference

Tropentag 2020 was held as a **virtual conference**. The FTA team actively participated during the conference and engaged in the discussion of issues related to agricultural and rural development research. All the sessions were recorded by the conference organizers and are available via this [link](#).

The FTA hosts **Tropentag in 2022**.



# Meet our Alumni — Academic issues

## Dalibor Sýkorovský



Dalibor Sýkorovský, the founder of the project [True Shiitake](#), uniquely combines intensive and extensive agriculture.

### 1. Could you introduce the True Shiitake project?

We grow Shiitake mushrooms (*Lentinula edodes*) in the traditional Japanese method and we collect them from fallen trees because we firmly believe in a sustainable future. Their cultivation enters as an intermediate stage in the production of firewood. This means that for several years it is possible to create healthy food and then use the wood as actual firewood.

On a few hundred square metres we are able to produce up to 30 times more protein than beef cattle. For this we need about 70 times less water. We are working hard to achieve full energy self-sufficiency using 100% rainwater and waste materials.

### 2. What did you gain during your time at the FTA?

Throughout my bachelor and master studies, I gained a wide overview about agriculture in tropic and subtropic regions and knowledge in the natural sciences. On top of that I was allowed to travel, get to know different cultures and was inspired by them.

### 3. Any recommendations for current and future FTA students?

Don't waste your time. Now more than ever there is a lot of work to be done in agriculture and ecology fields in the Czech Republic and also in other developing countries.

Find the whole interview [here](#).

## Welcome course

Here at the Faculty of Tropical AgriSciences, we cherish our multicultural environment and welcome our international students. This year, we offered a Welcome Course: Multicultural Environment and Study in the Czech Republic which took place both in person and online.

Ginny from Canada reported "The first part of the course was held online due to the majority of students not being in the Czech Republic yet. It was amazing to see how people from various continents were able to participate despite the distance."

## The 2<sup>nd</sup> wave of coronavirus

The University was locked down for the second time from October 2020 due to Covid-19.

**What are the personal experiences of MSc. students?** Thanks to the second corona wave, classes are now once again online and this has made it difficult to work with other classmates and have those valuable conversations in person. This is very difficult to recreate in an online environment. I do appreciate the organization of the classes and well, since we have had practice with the first lockdown, this second wave has been easier to manage from a mental health perspective.

**What are you looking forward to after Covid-19 is over?** FTA students (in the [ICARD](#) and [WLPMC](#) study programmes) reported: I am looking forward to meeting some other students in my programme. I have met many of them online so far and I am fascinated by the diversity in our programme when it comes to culture, nationality and perspectives about agriculture and international development. It will also be great to attend some classes in-person once the restrictions have come to an end. And Travel!! It is our passion and this faculty helps us merge that passion with our professional lives, so I am sure that most of us cannot wait to travel again.

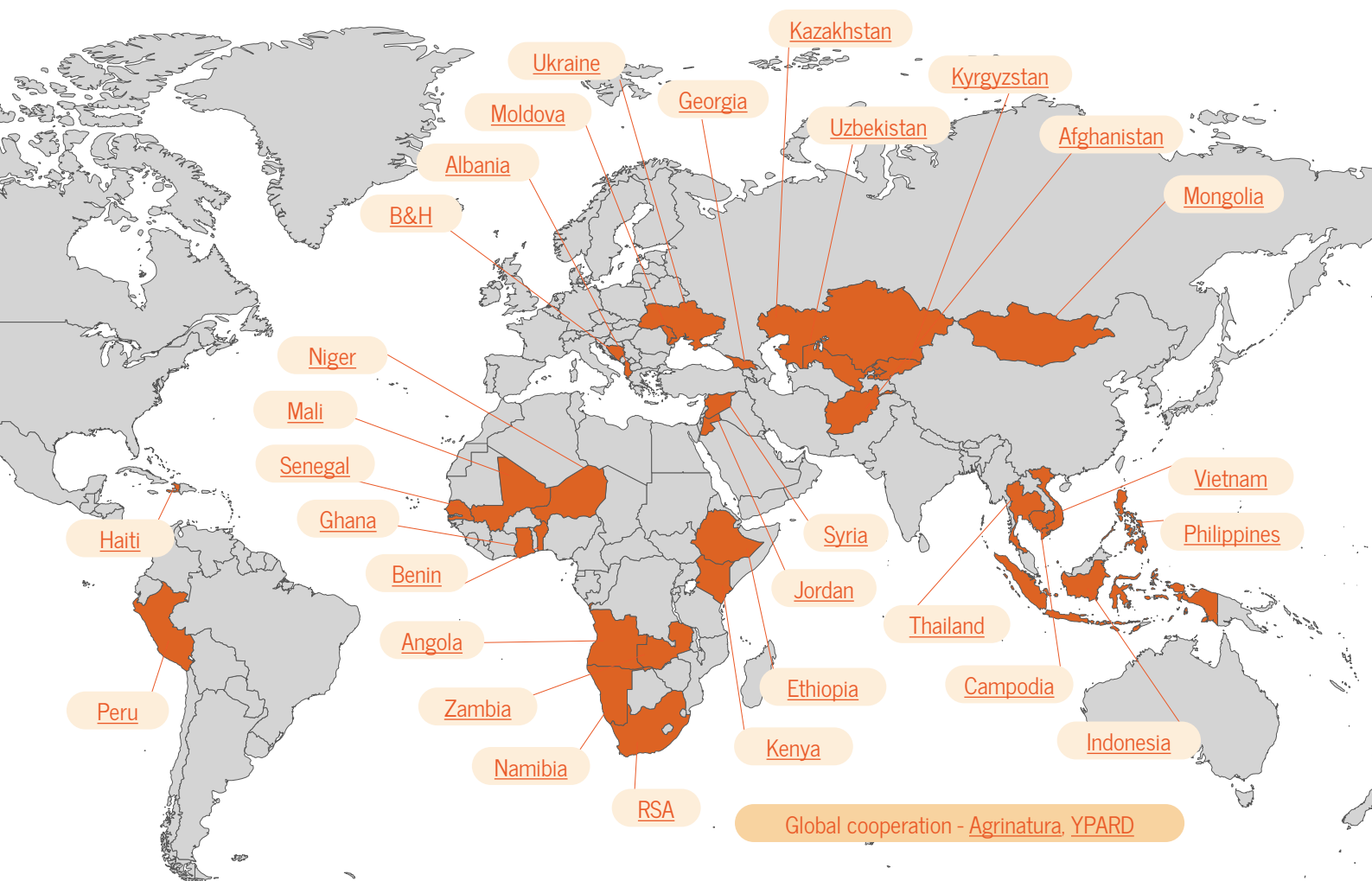
## EU career

A project called EU Career has been established in order to raise awareness of career opportunities in the EU among students and university graduates. This year, 160 European universities are participating, including the Czech University of Life Sciences Prague. Lucie Dostalíková, a doctoral student at the Faculty of Tropical AgriSciences, was nominated as CZU career ambassador. Are you interested in learning more about EU Careers CZU? Follow the [Facebook](#) link!

FTA Alumni register [here](#). We are proud of our alumni! We want to cooperate! Join our team and contact us at [alumniFTZ@ftz.czu.cz](mailto:alumniFTZ@ftz.czu.cz) !

# FTA Projects and Partnerships

As a Fair Trade Faculty, we support responsible consumption and sustainable development.



## Do you want to cooperate with the FTA?

We are interested in cooperation on

- > Research
- > Projects
- > Guest lectures
- > Internships
- > Sharing experiences
- > Other

Let us know about you! Keep in touch!



## Contact

- > Please visit <https://www.ftz.czu.cz/en/>
- > Follow us     
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